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The city-building - country-serving...

[Athens, Ga.]

[1914?]

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THE CITY-BUILDING *and* COUNTRY - SERVING MUNICIPALITY

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A Brief Statement of Municipal Social Service

With Special Reference to Athens

From the
Classes in Educational Sociology,
The Peabody School of Education,
University of Georgia.

(Reprinted from The Athens Banner,
May 24, 1914.)

THE CITY-BUILDING—COUNTRY-SERVING MUNICIPALITY

A Brief Survey of the Field of Municipal Services to be Rendered by the City to its Citizen-stockholders, to its Supporting Rural Constituency, and to All Those within its Gates.

WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE CITY OF ATHENS.

Presented by

Arthur G. Crafts
Mason J. Florence
Thomas A. Maxwell
Henry M. Pitts
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Members of Education 9, a Course in Educational Sociology in the **Peabody School of Education, University of Georgia.**

Municipal Social Services.

Introductory Note.

In justice to the group of men making this study and to the course of study itself it should be stated that the form of report here presented was submitted to the class and by them accepted as a composite of the several reports made, within the limitations of the purpose of this paper During the few weeks devoted to the study of municipal services each member of the class pursued a separate inquiry within one of the principal branches of municipal social service and each member presented a separate complete summary report, the reports varying considerably in the scope and grasp of the subject. It should be remembered, then, that the present paper presents rather the outline and the spirit of the program of work without purporting to go into details. The method is therefore partly academic and might well be applied to any town or city. The presentation conforms also to a definite plan of combining, wherever possible theoretical study with practical application and practical civic co-operation through local mediums of publicity. It is hoped that this method will be appreciated by a consedirable number of citizens who will read carefully what the boys have to present.

—HOWARD W. ODUM.

The Scope and Purpose of the Paper.

This paper is presented as a simple, yet comprehensive, statement of the scope of social services which the citizen may expect of the present-day efficient city government and concerning which it is the privilege and duty of the average citizen to become informed. The plan to present the paper in this form grew out of the experience of a group of student-citizens starting with little knowledge of municipal services, working earnestly for several weeks upon varied and general and specific problems, and finding considerable satisfaction in the resulting knowledge of what constitutes the social services rendered by the city to its citizens. From observation and study, and from the testimony of those in a position to know, it seems fair to assume that the average citizen belongs to the same class as this group of students, namely having only a very partial knowledge of the home city and its functions and at the same time desirous of acquiring more information without the necessity of going exhaustively into a study of city government and social conditions. That the citizens should keep informed upon such matters is clear from several self-evident considerations: in order to appreciate the problems and responsibilities resting upon the officials chosen; in order to appreciate the problems and responsibilities resting upon the private individual; in order to be able to co-operate intelligently with the official government; in order to exercise intelligently the rights of publicity toward public acts and officials; and in order to guarantee self, or any taxpayer the minimum amount of taxes with the maximum amount of economy and efficiency in the expenditure of the public funds. No matter what the form of government, this is the first essential of progress and improvement in social welfare for the city. To apply this information to a specific locality is to make its value two-fold.

Social Service—Economy and Efficiency—The City.

Perhaps there is no tendency in modern times so clearly defined and so steadily progressing as the tendency toward social service. This means simply that in the fields of Education, Science, Politics, Religion and in fact, in the major portion of social life, the fact has been recognized that the highest efficiency and the greatest service achieved by the individual will be found in service to society and fellowman. In terms of moral sanction it means that they who live unto themselves live in vain; in terms of social efficiency it means

that the individual who neglects the development of his social nature, or who grows rich upon his fellows to their hurt, or who uses the public moneys for his own gain, is the greatest of social offenders. This state of social consciousness nas been brought about by progress in society through the increasing importance and interdependence of social relationship together with the higher development of social personality.

Social relationships and the obligations of social service are most clearly defined in the modern city which represents at once the most advanced and most complex form of civilization the world over. Because of the concentration of population; of the predominance of secondary occupations and the massing of industry; of the interpendence of the population with its ever increasing relationships; and of the other various outgrowths of city life, the social responsibility has increased a hundred fold. From these conditions have arisen new and larger problems of administration; of health, safety, convenience and education; together with the manifold problems of general social welfare. From these, again, have arisen increase opportunities for expert service and increased demands for business government and organization. In the city responsibility for the public

welfare has taken the form of accountability of government and government officials for enconmy and efficiency in the expenditure of public funds, and of accountability of private citizens for support in this undertaking. By economy we may mean simply the careful, scientific and well-planned expenditure of money for the definite purposes and services for which funds are provided; by efficiency we mean primarily the adequate meeting of social needs within the prescribed limits of city government in co-operation with private support. How true this is and how important to the welfare of all the people will appear from an examination of the scope of municipal social service.

The Scope of Municipal Services.

The forms of organization differ widely in different cities; the service departments and divisions are almost as numerous as the cities themselves. But the fundamental services of the city to its constituency are the same in general for all cities, means for meeting these needs varying often according to local conditions. The principal municipal services may be classified in the following divisions: General administration; city planning; public works; public health; sanitation and housing inspection; charities; corrections; public safety;

public education; financial organization; civic up-lift and general social services; private services in the municipality; and services to the rural communities adjacent. The story of what is included in each of these will be told in a brief outline of principal topics under each division, the summary of which will give the complete story of the city's services.

General Administration.

That the general aministration and government of a corporation spending thousands, hundreds of thousands and millions of dollars is a most important service, requiring great responsibility and efficiency, is not infrequently overlooked when this corporation happens to be the city government of all the people. And yet this is precisely the most particular of all chartered corporations for the people. The general administration not only means supervising the enactment of all services but includes many important special branches. There is the legislative branch with its council, board of aldermen, or commissioners, together with clerks therefor; there is the executive branch with the mayor, manager, superintendent or other head of the government with his executive boards and commissions, with the auditor or comptroller, with the treasurer or chamberlains, and with the solicitors or other legal advisors;

there is the judicial branch with such municipal courts, justice courts or other courts and coroners, together with sheriffs and marshals, as do not belong to special departments; and finally the election officers and the upkeep and management of government buildings and properties belonging to the people. It is worth something to the aministration officials to know that the people whom they serve are acquainted with the duties being performed.

City Planning.

The scientific planning for the present and future of the city constitutes as much a part of its services as do carefully made plans for the success of any business organization; and more because it involves the welfare in life, health and comfort of many more people than any private organization. Therefore it is of the utmost importance to plan for recreational facilities in parks and playgrounds; for transportation facilities in the location and construction of lines and terminals; in the direction and expansion of streets; in factory facilities with reference to segregation and enlargement; for workmen's homes with reference to the welfare of the city and the workmen; and for both civic and industrial centres with reference to general civic and industrial efficiency. It is not enough to allow

the city to grow up without recreation; to allow the street car companies to select routes and the railroad terminals; to allow the proprietors of factories to plan only for their own gain; or even for the landlord to ignore the rights and wishes of the laboring classes within the city. Planning ahead not only brings future efficiency and welfare but prevents untold waste of time, energy and money with the consequent ills of maladjustment. It is therefore good business.

Public Works.

Under the division of public works are the highways with their construction, inspection and maintenance; with the cleaning and sweeping of streets and the accompanying organization and management of labor; and finally with the disposition of sweepings and street garbage and other waste. Next are the sewers, with the construction and maintenance and the disposal of sewage, and of course the organization and management of labor. Next are the public utilities, such as the publicly owned water and light plants, with their construction and maintenance and all public buildings or other property. Within the field of public works the American city in the past has been in many cases noted for its inefficiency and waste; and no field perhaps would repay a careful study more than this.

Public Health.

The public health department should begin with a public health program. The list of public health services comprises medical inspection service, to control contagious diseases; hospital services; food inspection service; meat inspection service; milk inspection services; infant welfare services; laboratory services; and finally statistical services. Failure to control contagious diseases is responsible for a large part of health inefficiencies; failure to provide inspection of foods is a most common neglect; failure to provide specially for infant welfare work in the summer results in the death from preventable causes of hundreds of little children; failure to provide adequate laboratory services cripples service in most of the divisions of health work; and a failure to provide statistical services results in the city having no standard or record by which to measure its work or progress.

Sanitation and Housing Inspection.

Sanitation is the prevention work looking toward health efficiency and includes inspection of congested areas, disposal of garbage and sewage, and the general cleanliness of the city and includes the sanitary inspection of houses and premises and plumbing. The supervision of

buildings includes the plans of construction and plumbing for both sanitation and safety, and construction and inspection of buildings with reference to fire prevention. Such supervision may also include provisions in accord with model building plans and regulation in accordance with city planning as already outlined.

Public Charities andCorrections.

The demands upon the city for charity services fall into two general divisions: those having to do with charities within institutions supported by the city, that is, indoor relief; and those having to do with charities administered in the home of the needy, that is our-door relief. In the smaller cities charities are almost entirely outdoor, local or county almshouses taking care of the other needs. In connection with the charity services which the city may render two other aspects are important: the first has to do with relief by prevention. through city planning, employment bureas, insurance and savings system, juvenile agencies and others; and the second has to do with the efficient cooperation with private charities and philanthropy, this itself constituting an important, and in many cases, the principal means of charity work by the city. Services relating to corrections are those having to do with prisons, penitentiaries and reformator,

ies, together with the criminal courts, juvenile courts and other modes of dealing with offenders, especially youthful offenders. Than the problem of corrections there is perhaps no single service to be rendered of more far reaching significance.

Public Safety.

The public safety of the city is commonly considered under the two heads, the services being classified into police protection and fire protection. The police department has varied obligations to perform. including its own efficient organization and control, the training and equipment of officers and recruits and effective rules and regulations governing safety service. It has in addition to the vigilance for criminal offenders the regulation and control of street traffic, transportation and the use of streets; the special assignment of the control of vice, and efficient methods for the detection of harmful forces through secret and other investigations. The police departments in American cities have been specially subservient to politics and graft, in which they have retarded the progress of cities. The fire department has not only to perform its duty of fire fighting, through which it must have an efficient organization and administration, but it must also take special steps toward fire prevention. Through

this latter service a new efficiency awaits the redirected fire forces.

Public Education.

Public education in this classification is largely the public schools and would seem to be self explanatory. And yet the services to be rendered by the public schools, with the accompanying complex problems of administration, are far greater than any practical conception ordinarily held by the citizen. These services include the efficient organization and administration of the school system both from without and within; the problem of selecting efficient teachers without the rule of politics; the problem of equipment of teachers; the problem of selecting a practical curriculum with varied courses of study; the problem of grading and classification of school children; the problems of retardation and elimination; the special problems of special and exceptional children; the problem of special schools, night schools, vocational schools, co-operative schools, schools for defective and and all others; the problem of the health of the child with adequate medical inspection; the problem of the general school hygiene, including the buildings and grounds, the heating and lighting, ventilating and seating, sanitation and comfort; the large problem of recreation and playgrounds;

the problem of the wider use of the school house for social services to the community; the problem of citizen and patron co-operation; and with all these and many others, comes the specific problems of utilizing moneys, the supply department itself constituting a considerable business; and the efficiency of all these services will depend largely upon the great problem of selecting and organizing the board of education, this having constituted for many years the greatest of administration problems. What a tremendous field for citizens co-operation and civic service!

Financial Organization.

The financial methods obtaining in the city administration may contribute much to the efficiency or inefficiency of municipal serivces. Among the most important of these services is that of budget making, in which the program of the year is too often marred instead of made. Important alongside the budget making is the system of accounting including office accounts, cost accounts, operative records, forms of reporting, filing systems, mechanical aid and general facility in keeping books for the public. Poor book keeping is no more justified in the public's business than elsewhere, but rather less justified. Important also is the method of financing public improvements; while the

methods of assessing and collecting revenue constitute a tremendous task for public services.. No where more than here is the demand for efficiency and business government more apparent and urgent.

Constructive Civic Uplift.

More and more the modern city is recognizing its general obligation to perform as many social services, other than the technical and mechanical duties of city government, as possible consistent with circumstances. Among these services are the public libraries and reading rooms; the civic centers; the supervision of weights and measures; the organization and administration of the city markets; the inspection of food supplies; civil service and pension services to employees; and many other similar efforts. That there will be found a means and an avenue for increased efficiency and social service in these civic efforts cannot be doubted.

Private Services.

And yet with all the formal and organized services of the city, complete efficiency is not possible without the thorough co-ordination of official with private services. Co-operation with the churches; with the hospitals; with the charities; with the women's clubs; with all civic clubs; with private educational institutions or public institutions other than city; with

chambers of commerce or other booster organizations; and with all other private resources. Civic education civic consciousness are synonymous with these efforts which are in turn co-ordinate with formal municipal services.

Services to the Rural Community.

But the city must not only be city-building within its own domian, but country-serving in its services toward the surrounding communities upon whom it depends for support and expansion. This is true both for its own perpetuity and welfare and it is also true from the higher obligations to social service to society. In this capacity the city can aid, in more or less degree and in varying ways, the rural districts by increasing efficiency in farming; in merchandise and exchange; in transportation; in communication; in rural finance; in better co-operation and organization; in health and sanitation; in adding to the social satisfactions of country life; in aiding the rural church; the rural school; in general civic education and publicity; in promoting the welfare of country womanhood; the country home and family; the beautification of the country; in the recognition of rural leadership and rural values; in building up communities and in promoting co-operation with governmental functions. How the

farm demonstrator, the educational leader, the road expert and many others sent by the city have made over the rural districts is now matter for record. That every city must consider this aspect of its services is synonymous with the assertion that every city wishes to grow and to provide efficient services for its people. No greater opportunity has been overlooked than this.

An Efficiency Score Card.

To what extent our cities are measuring up to the standards outlined, constitutes our problem, both of study and of constructive planning. An attempt is being made to formulate an efficiency score card for the ideal American city, so that cities in their present stage of efficiency and in their planning for future social service may have a uniform basis upon which to work. It is necessary that this uniform standard conform to the latest word upon the subject. Such a score card has not yet been satisfactorily formulated but the hope is expressed that in a short time it may be approximated.

For the present the efforts to measure social efficiency will have to be limited to three or four means. First, statistics gathered by the United States census in financial statistics of cities give us a comparative basis as

measured by expenditure for governmental services. Under this division two averages are taken, the first for cities having from 30,000 to 50,000 people, the goal set for Athens within the next two decades, and second, the average for all cities in the country. A second method of attempting a standard measuring scale will be found in summarizing the best of the research, study and practices in this country and abroad, and selecting therefrom the standard of excellence in each of the several service divisions. A third method will be found in the expert testimony of city planning experts, business men and organizations, students of government and social science and others specialists, the method to provide a census of relative gradings in the total scheme of 100 per cent to be given to each of the important divisions already outlined. The composite or average from all these ratings would constitute a progressive program of work. Such a measuring scale is now in preparation. In anticipation of partial underlying principles to be incorporated in such a program it may be said that emphasis will be placed upon prevention rather than upon correction. In this country it is estimated that we spend $500,000,000 more for correction and protection from

evils which we have allowed to grow up, than for all schools, recreation, churches and other constructive agencies.

Athens and Other Citites.

Taking the classification given by the census, and not that outlined above for the ideal plan, the following distribution of expenditures for the several aspects of municipal services will show the extent of variation and the limitation in both scope and degree of our present municipal services as well as the need for a more uniform classification of services. For the 193 cities for which figures are given, the following pro-rata of expenditures is found: General Government, 11.7 per cent; Protection to Person and Property, 23.4 per cent; Conservation of Health, 1.9 per cent; Sanitation or Promotion of Cleanliness, 8.1 per cent; Highways, 11.8 per cent; Charities, Hospitals and Corrections, 6.6 per cent; Education, 29.8 per cent; Recreation, 3.7 per cent; Miscellaneous, 0.4 per cent; General, 2.6 per cent. For all cities having between 30,000 and 50,000 population, the following proportions obtain: General Government, 9.1 per cent; Protection to Person and Property, 21.9 per cent; Conservation of Health, 1.6 per cent; Sanitation or Promotion of Cleanliness, 7.2 per

cent; Highways, 14.1 per cent; Charities, Hospitals and Corrections, 3.7 per cent; education, 38.4 per cent; Recreation, 2.4 per cent; Miscellaneous, 0.5 per cent; General, 1.3 per cent. For the city of Athens the same proportionate figures, gathered from the Annual Financial Statement, are: General Government, 12.1 per cent; Protection to Person and Property, 29.1 per cent; Conservation of Health, 4.0 per cent; Sanitation or Promotion of Cleanliness, 5.2 per cent; Highways, 18.4 per cent; Charities, Hospitals and Corrections, 1.4 per cent; Education, 28 per cent; Recreation, 0.0 per cent; Miscellaneous, 0.1 per cent; and General, 1.3 per cent. These percentages are obtained after certain redistribution of items is made to conform to the above classification, as for example, from the Health work in Athens is deducted the amounts for street cleaning. Noteworthy is the fact that nothing is spent for recreation, as such, although recreation has well been called the physical basis of social organization. Although the relative percentages of expenditures for Athens compare favorable in general with other cities, it will be well to make a special observation of the needs and opportunities now present in this city.

Suggestions and Recommendations.

The city of Athens appears specially adapted both in its present opportunities and in the spirit of its people for making great progress in all phases of efficiency of service as outlined above. That perfection of such a program is a matter of long growth and persistent efforts may be assumed. There are, however, many specific steps which may and should be taken at once, in so far as the beginning in thought, planning, and actual enactment are concerned. In the suggestions which follow no attempt is made to go exhaustively into detail, the purpose being only to suggest in accordance with the program of points already outlined. It is not presumed to make expert recommendations in any field, other than the extent to which classification and suggestion in accordance with the most advanced thought may be expert.

No suggestion is presumed, for instance, concerning the division of financial methods, since this is admittedly a matter for expert accountancy and scientific budget planning; this study on the contrary had available neither the time nor the expert services with the accompanying expenses which would have been needed to be of service to the city in this respect. Likewise in order to make

suggestions concerning the public education many expert studies would have been necessary, entirely without the scope of this inquiry. In this connection, however, attention may be called, for instance, to the question whether an itemized budget and system of accounting for expenses, on the one hand, or an increased use of the school plants and yard, on the other, would not increase efficiency of service to the city generally. Likewise, with reference to the division of general administration, an examination of the new proposed charter which is just being completed gives evidence that many of the defects of the present administration system will be remedied, and that further details must be enacted by the councils and classified under the several specified divisions of public service. The important problem here will be to establish an efficient and clearly defined functional organization with reference to division or departmental units of organization.

In fact, all suggestions take the form of a challenge to unusual opportunity in the city of Athens, opportunities for every type of private and official effort. The fact that Athens is a superior and attractive city gives no license to rest its progress in municipal service but on the contrary

offers increased responsibility. To those who feel the desire and willingness to express their loyalty and citizenship in terms of constructive service, the following opportunities, among the most important of a larger list, arranged according to the classification previously used, will perhaps offer something of stimulation—perhaps inspiration?

1. Provisions for not only nominal, but adequate recreational facilities, especially parks and playgrounds. Can the city ever become socially efficient without such provisions, and even though future generations must pay the penalty in ill-health, crime and vice or inefficiency of citizenship, is there any standard whereby the present generation is excused from meeting so great a social need?

2. Provisions for a civic center, to include an adequate public library, reading rooms, art gallery, children's playrooms and a place for civic assembly meetings. That this should be situated near the city hall and should provide so far as possible for preserving local traditions and interest would be an added feature. No amount of commercial expansion can take the place of the public library and the other civic and cultural forces. The simplest of laws applies here:

The city provides or its suffers the consequences.

3. Provisions for an expansion of facilities for the city's laboring citizens and factories in accordance with lower rates of living. That the high rates of interest and rents and the scarcety of accommodations tend to retard the city's growth and comfort is a matter for serious study. This is, however, a matter for co-operation of city with private capital and planning but none the less urgent on that account.

4. Provisions for adequate terminal facilities in a central union station for the railroads. The city must be handicapped so long as the present arrangement prevails.

5. Provisions for the sanitary, and if possible profitable, disposal of the city's garbage.

6. Provisions for more adequate inspection of and better service to the negro sections of the town, looking to the elimination of the menace of disease to the community and to the raising of the standards of this class of laborers and citizens.

7. Provisions for adequate hospital services for the city, either public or public in co-operation with private.

8. Provisions for meeting the needs of youthful offenders and for preventing juvenile crime. That

juvenile offenses are on the increase and that a child may be forced to spend days or nights in the prisons for petty offenses indicates a serious problem.

9. Provisions for special efforts toward fire prevention and the enforcement of regulations concerning fire escapes, exits to theaters and the crowding of isles in theaters.

10. Provisions for the special handling of the vice problem and other evils, with special reference to the visiting student body in Athens.

11. Provisions for the supervision of weights and measures in the city.

12. Provisions for adequate food, meat and milk inspection, for which the need is urgent.

13. Provisions for a public or co-operative market for the service of the city and the country.

14. Provisions for adequate accommodations to the visitors from rural districts and towns in the form of a co-operative or a municipal wagon shed, perhaps organized in connection with the public markets. This is needed not only for the comfort of visitors and the success of merchants but for the sanitary protection of certain parts of the city.

15. Provisions for a rest room and city home for women who may spend the day in the city.

16. Provisions whereby the city of Athens, the University of Georgia and the State College of Agriculture may unite in a program to make Clarke county a model county of Georgia, in accordance with the rural services mentioned above.

The Outlook and the Will.

While many other special features will arise in time, such as provisions to prevent overcrowding in the city for all time to come, the development of the beautiful suburban territory, the ordering of streets and the supervision of building plans for model and serviceable building, together with the scores of critical details within the different departments of service, the above suggestion suffice to indicate the present opportunity. That Athens is peculiarly adapted in resources and citizenship to carry out these plans; that no serious obstacles lie in the way of a single project; and that the will to begin was never so strong as present—these all constitute an ideal and an aim the attainment of which will make a new era in the city and the state.

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